

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

What is claimed is:

1-6. **(Cancelled)**

7. **(Previously Presented)** An attachment device adapted for use with a tension link, the tension link including a tension link head and shaft, the device comprising:

 a shank having first and second ends,

 said first end having a securing mechanism, and

 said second end devoid of threads and comprising at least a wall defined by a hollow core, a first expansion slot disposed on said wall, and a central aperture, wherein said wall includes a curved exterior surface, wherein said second end is expandably deformable to accommodate the insertion of the tension link head through the central aperture and into said hollow core, and wherein the tension link head is retained within said hollow core after insertion therein;

 wherein said attachment device receivingly accepts a connector, said connector comprising a head receptacle that at least partially surrounds said second end when said connector is seated on said attachment device, said head receptacle having a curved surface for engaging the curved exterior surface of the second end when the connector is seated on the attachment device, wherein when the tension link head is inserted in the hollow core and the connector is seated on the attachment device, said head receptacle limits the deformation of the second end when a tensile force is applied through the tension link, thereby securing the tension

link head within the hollow core, said tensile force operating to secure the connector to the attachment device.

8. **(Previously Presented)** A method of installing a surgical implant assembly, comprising the steps of:

a) securing an attachment device to human bone, said attachment device having a shank with first and second ends, said second end having a wall defined by a hollow core, a central aperture, and an expansion slot disposed on said wall through said second end to said hollow core;

b) inserting a tension link including a proximal end having a tension link head and a distal end having threads, into said attachment device by expanding said second end of said attachment device and placing said tension link head within said hollow core such that said distal end of said tension link extends through said central aperture;

c) seating a connector onto at least a portion of said second end of said attachment device, wherein said distal end of said tension link extends through a tension link cavity in said connector, further wherein said connector includes a head receptacle to receive said at least a portion of said second end of said attachment device during said seating step;

d) inserting an implant component through an aperture in said connector; and

e) securing said connector to said attachment device, and said implant component to said connector by threading and tightening a link nut onto said distal end of said tension link;

wherein, said head receptacle of said receptacle acts to partially confine said second end of said attachment device and limits expansion of said second end after said securing step.

9 -15. **(Cancelled)**

16. **(Previously Presented)** A surgical implant assembly, comprising:

an attachment device having first and second ends, said second end comprising an enlarged area including a wall defined by a hollow core, a central aperture contiguous with said hollow core, and at least one expansion slot disposed on said wall, wherein said wall includes a curved exterior surface;

a tension link having a proximal end and a distal end, said proximal end having a tension link head and said distal end including means for securing, said tension link head insertable into said hollow core through said central aperture by deforming said enlarged area using said expansion slot, the tension link head thereby retained within said hollow core; and

a connector having a head receptacle and a tension link cavity, said head receptacle having a curved surface for engaging the curved exterior surface of the second end when the connector is seated on the attachment device, wherein when the tension link head is inserted in the hollow core and the connector is seated on the attachment device, said head receptacle limits the deformation of the second end when a tensile force is applied through the tension link, thereby securing the tension link head within the hollow core, said tensile force being applied by the securing means and operating to secure the connector to the attachment device.

17. **(Previously Presented)** The surgical implant assembly as claimed in Claim 16, wherein said means for securing comprises a link nut threaded onto said distal end of said tension link.

18. **(Previously Presented)** The surgical implant assembly as claimed in Claim 16, further comprising at least a second expansion slot.

19. **(Previously Presented)** The surgical implant assembly as claimed in Claim 18, wherein said second expansion slot is positioned substantially diametrically opposite said at least one expansion slot.

20. **(Previously Presented)** The surgical implant assembly as claimed in Claim 16, wherein said second end is devoid of threads.

21. **(Previously Presented)** The surgical implant assembly as claimed in Claim 16, wherein said first end of said attachment device comprises screw threads.

22-28. **(Cancelled)**

29. **(Previously Presented)** An attachment device adapted for use with a tension link, the tension link including a tension link head and shaft, the device comprising:

a shank having first and second ends,

said first end having a securing mechanism, and

said second end devoid of threads and comprising at least a wall defined by a hollow core, a first expansion slot disposed on said wall, and a central aperture, wherein said wall includes a curved exterior surface, wherein said second end is expandably deformable to accommodate the insertion of the tension link head through the central aperture and into said hollow core, and wherein the tension link head is retained within said hollow core after insertion therein;

wherein said attachment device receivingly accepts a connector, said connector comprising a head receptacle that at least partially surrounds said second end when said connector is seated on said attachment device, said head receptacle having a curved surface for engaging the curved exterior surface of the second end when the connector is seated on the attachment device, wherein when the tension link head is inserted in the hollow core and the

connector is seated on the attachment device, said head receptacle limits the deformation of the second end when a tensile force is applied through the tension link, thereby securing the tension link head within the hollow core, said tensile force operating to secure the connector to the attachment device;

wherein said connector further comprises a gap provided in association with an implant component aperture, wherein when an implant component is inserted in said implant component aperture, said tension additionally operates to close said gap to thereby secure said implant component in said implant component aperture.

30. **(Previously Presented)** The method as claimed in Claim 8, wherein during step (e), tightening the link nut causes a closing of a gap, the closing of the gap causing the implant component to be secured within the aperture.

31. **(Previously Presented)** The attachment device as claimed in Claim 16, wherein said connector further comprises a gap provided in association with an implant component aperture, wherein when an implant component is inserted in said implant component aperture, said tension additionally operates to close said gap to thereby secure said implant component in said implant component aperture.

32. **(Currently Amended)** A surgical implant assembly, comprising:
an attachment device having first and second ends, said second end comprising an enlarged area including a wall defined by a hollow core, a central aperture contiguous with said hollow core, wherein said wall includes a curved exterior surface;

a tension link having a proximal end and a distal end, said proximal end having a tension link head and said distal end including means for securing, said tension link head insertable into said hollow core;

an implant component; and

a connector having a head receptacle provided in association with a tension link cavity, and an implant component aperture provided in association with a gap, said implant component aperture operable to receive the implant component, said head receptacle having a curved surface for engaging the curved exterior surface of the second end when the connector is seated on the attachment device, wherein ~~[[when]]~~ the tension link head is inserted completely into ~~[[in]]~~ the hollow core and the connector is seated on the attachment device, a tensile force applied by the securing means operates to secure the connector to the attachment device, wherein said tensile force also operates to close said gap to thereby secure the implant component within the implant component aperture, and further wherein said head receptacle limits ~~[[the]]~~ deformation of said second end of said attachment device when said tensile force is applied.

33. **(Previously Presented)** The surgical implant assembly as claimed in Claim 32, wherein said means for securing comprises a link nut threaded onto said distal end of said tension link.

34. **(Previously Presented)** The surgical implant assembly of Claim 32 wherein said second end of said attachment device includes an expansion slot disposed on said wall and is deformable to accommodate the insertion of the tension link head through the central aperture and into said hollow core, and

wherein the tension link head is retained within said hollow core by an engagement between the head receptacle and the curved exterior surface of the second end, the engagement occurring when the tension link head is inserted in the hollow core and the connector is seated on the attachment device, wherein said engagement is maintained by a tensile force applied by the

securing mechanism through the tension link, and operates to limit the deformation of the second end when thereby securing the tension link head within the hollow core.

35. **(Previously Presented)** The surgical implant assembly as claimed in Claim 34, further comprising at least a second expansion slot.

36. **(Previously Presented)** The surgical implant assembly as claimed in Claim 35, wherein said second expansion slot is positioned substantially diametrically opposite said at least one expansion slot.

37. **(Previously Presented)** The surgical implant assembly as claimed in Claim 32, wherein said attachment device includes entry channel operable to receive said tension link.

38. **(Previously Presented)** The surgical implant assembly as claimed in Claim 37, wherein said attachment device includes a tension link slot.

39. **(Previously Presented)** The surgical implant assembly as claimed in Claim 32, wherein said second end is devoid of threads.

40. **(Previously Presented)** The surgical implant assembly as claimed in Claim 32, wherein said first end of said attachment device comprises screw threads.

41-45. **(Cancelled)**